

April 11, 2014

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing
and Urban Development, and Related
Agencies
Senate Appropriations Committee
Senate Dirksen Building, 142
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing
and Urban Development, and Related
Agencies
Senate Appropriations Committee
Senate Dirksen Building, 128
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Murray and Ranking Member Collins:

As the subcommittee begins its consideration of an appropriation bill for the agencies within the jurisdiction of the Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies, I respectfully request support for the programs listed below. The funding requested for the national programs is to be spent at the agencies' discretion within the existing budget line and is not intended for any specific business, state, community or other entity.

1. Title: Native American Housing Block Grants

Program Description: Title I of the *Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996* (P.L. 104-330) authorized the Native American Housing Block Grant program. This program provides an allocation of funds on a formula basis to Indian tribes and their tribally designated housing entities to help them address housing needs within their communities. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) estimated that in 2011, out of a population of 1.5 million American Indians and Alaska Natives in block grant formula areas, over 100,000 households were either overcrowded or lacked adequate plumbing or kitchen facilities.

Fiscal Year 2014 Enacted: \$675 Million

Fiscal Year 2015 President's Budget Request: \$650 million

Additional Amount Requested: +\$175 million

Rationale: The President's Budget request does not meet all tribal housing needs as reflected in HUD estimates that 100,000 households are overcrowded and lack adequate plumbing. Additional funding will keep pace with the increased cost housing construction, energy costs, and other inflationary factors.

Budget Account: Housing and Urban Development, Public and Indian Housing Programs, Native American Housing Block Grants

2. Title: Essential Air Services

Program Description: Through 1997, the Essential Air Service program was funded from the Airport and Airway Trust Fund. Starting in 1998, the Federal Aviation Administration reauthorization funded it as a mandatory program supported by overflight fees under the Essential Air Service and Rural Airport Improvement Fund. In addition to mandatory funding supported by overflight fees, direct appropriations from the Airport and Airway Trust Fund to Payments to Air Carriers have been enacted every year beginning in 2002 to meet the needs of the Essential Air Service program.

Fiscal Year 2014 Enacted: \$149 million

Fiscal Year 2015 President's Budget Request: \$155 million

Additional Amount Requested: Support the President's Budget

Budget Account: Transportation, Office of the Secretary of Transportation, Trust Funds, Payments to Air Carriers

3. Title: Title XI Loans

Program Description: The Maritime Guaranteed Loan (Title XI) program provides for a full faith and credit guarantee of debt obligations issued by U.S or foreign ship owners to finance or refinance the construction, reconstruction, or reconditioning of U.S.-flag vessels or eligible export vessels in U.S. shipyards; or for a full faith and credit guarantee of debt obligations issued by U.S. shipyard owners to finance the modernization of shipbuilding technology at shipyards located in the United States.

Fiscal Year 2014 Enacted: \$35 Million

Fiscal Year 2015 President's Budget Request: No new loan subsidy funds are requested for additional ship construction loan guarantees in 2015.

Additional Amount Requested: +\$35 million

Rationale: A strong U.S. built and operated merchant marine is critical to national security, providing strategic sealift during times of war, and to the prosperity of non-contiguous states like Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico that rely on U.S.-flagged ships for interstate commerce. When new environmental regulations were imposed by the *Oil Pollution Act of 1990* (OPA-90), the Title XI loan guarantee program proved critical in allowing the U.S.-flagged fleet to meet the new requirements. The ECA requirements are analogous to the OPA-90 requirements in that they require significant new building and refurbishment of existing ships to meet new environmental requirements. Expanding the Title XI program will allow U.S.-flagged operators to refurbish their fleets and continue to meet national objectives for a robust domestic merchant marine and healthy U.S. shipbuilding industrial base.

Budget Account: Department of Transportation, Maritime Administration, Maritime Guaranteed Loan (Title XI) Program

4. Title: Assistance to Small Shipyard Grants

Program Description: The Assistance to Small Shipyards program assists shipyards across the country providing essential services to commercial and government ships. The *National Defense Authorization Act of 2006* authorized the Maritime Administration to make grants for capital and related improvements at eligible shipyard facilities that will foster efficiency, competitive operations, and quality ship construction, repair, and reconfiguration. Grant funds may also be used for maritime training programs to enhance technical skills and operational productivity in communities whose economies are related to or dependent upon the maritime industry.

Fiscal Year 2014 Enacted: \$0

Fiscal Year 2015 President's Budget Request: \$0

Additional Amount Requested: +\$10 million

Rationale: These grants support a vital segment of America's maritime economy and promote long-term job creation opportunities for smaller shipyards which often are not eligible for other sources of funding. Recognizing the importance of this program Congress provided approximately \$10 million in Fiscal Year 2012 and Fiscal Year 2013.

Budget Account: Transportation, Maritime Administration, Assistance to Small Shipyards

5. Title: Indian Community Development Block Grant

Program Description: This program provides eligible grantees with direct grants for use in developing viable Indian and Alaska Native communities, including decent housing, a suitable living environment, and economic opportunities, primarily for low- and moderate-income persons. Within this account, \$10 million will be set aside to address mold issues in Indian housing.

Fiscal Year 2014 Enacted: \$69 million

Fiscal Year 2015 President's Budget Request: \$70 million

Additional Amount Requested: Support President's Budget Request

Budget Account: Housing & Urban Development, Community Development Fund, Indian Tribes

6. Title: Railroad Safety Technology Grant

Program Description: This program should provide eligible grantees with funding to implement railroad safety measures, including the federally mandated Positive Train Control (PTC) system.

Fiscal Year 2014 Enacted: \$0

Fiscal Year 2015 President's Budget Request: \$0

Additional Amount Requested: \$70 million

Rationale: In 2008, Congress passed P.L. 110-432 Sec. 104 mandating all Class I and passenger railroads be equipped with Positive Train Control (PTC) by Dec. 31, 2015. PTC is a system to prevent train-to-train collisions, over-speed derailments, incursions

into work zones, and movement of a train through a switch in the wrong position. The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) made PTC one of its "10 Most Wanted Safety Recommendations" in 1990. Nevertheless it remains an unfunded federal mandate imposed on state passenger railroads. Congress should appropriate funding to permit timely implementation of this important safety technology or extend the deadline for implementation.

Budget Account: Transportation, Federal Railroad Administration, Railroad Safety Technology Grant

Bill Language Requested *if appropriations are not provided*: Section 104 of Public Law 110-432 is amended by striking "December 31, 2015" and inserting "December 31, 2020." Extending the deadline for implementation will allow for appropriate safety technology to be budgeted for and implemented consistent with law.

7. Title: Transit Formula and Bus Grants

Program Description: To provide funding to replace, rehabilitate, and purchase buses and related equipment, and to construct bus-related facilities. States may use these funds to supplement Urbanized Area and Rural Area formula grant programs.

Fiscal Year 2014 Enacted: \$8.595 million

Fiscal Year 2015 President's Budget Request: \$13.914 million

Additional Amount Requested: Support President's Budget Request

Rationale: These funds will help communities construct new transit facilities, as well as implement state and federal reporting requirements in addition to promoting alternative commuting methods to improve air quality.

Budget Account: Transportation, Federal Transit Administration, Transit Formula and Bus Grants

8. Title: Federal Lands and Tribal Programs

Program Description: To provide funding for transportation projects on Federal and Tribal lands for construction and engineering projects.

Fiscal Year 2014 Enacted: \$585 million

Fiscal Year 2015 President's Budget Request: \$960 million

Additional Amount Requested: Support President's Budget Request

Rationale: Funding will provide multi-modal access to basic community services including safer all-weather access to schools and healthcare facilities for 566 federally-recognized sovereign Tribal governments; improve multimodal access to recreational areas on public lands/national treasures; and expand economic development in and around Federal and Tribal lands while preserving the environment and reducing congestion.

Budget Account: Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, Transportation Trust Fund.

9. Title: NextGen Alternative Fuels for General Aviation

Program Description: Supports continuing efforts to find suitable replacement for 100 low lead aviation fuels, which is to be phased out over the next decade.

Fiscal Year 2014 Enacted: \$6 million

Fiscal Year 2015 President's Budget Request: \$6 million

Additional Amount Requested: Support President's Budget

Rationale: A replacement that is backward compatible with the existing fleet of general aviation aircraft is needed.

Budget Account: Transportation, Federal Aviation Administration, Air Traffic Control Facilities and Equipment- Landing and Navigation

10. Title: Landing and Navigation at Remote Airports

Program Description: The Enhanced Low Visibility Operations systems allow pilots to land with lower limited visibility conditions than standard procedures allow.

Fiscal Year 2014 Enacted: \$6 million

Fiscal Year 2015 President's Budget Request: \$6 million

Additional Amount Requested: +\$1.5 million

Accompanying Report Language Requested: Not less than \$1.5 million shall be used for advanced aircraft and airport navigation safety equipment for airports serving communities not connected to a road network that experience severe fog more than 120 days per year.

Budget Account: Transportation, Federal Aviation Administration, Air Traffic Control Facilities and Equipment- Landing and Navigation –Runway Visual Range and Enhanced Low Visibility Operations

Rationale: Communities that are not on road networks and experience frequent fog and other low-visibility situations are often cut off from the world, imposing severe public safety and economic consequences.

11. Title: Diversity of Air Traffic Controllers

Program Description: The FAA has recently made significant changes to the hiring practices for Air Traffic Control Specialists (ATCS), ostensibly to improve the diversity of the ATCS workforce.

Fiscal Year 2014 Enacted: \$7.336 million

Fiscal Year 2015 President's Budget Request: \$7.419 million

Additional Amount Requested: Support the President's Budget

Accompanying Report Language Requested: The Federal Aviation Administration shall cease implementation of the early 2014 changes to Air Traffic Control Specialist (ATCS) hiring and reconstitute the specialized pipeline for former military controllers and graduates of College Training Initiative (CTI) programs in addition to hiring open to the general public. No less than \$1 million shall be used to work with College Training

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Initiative schools to do outreach to under-represented communities in the Air Traffic Control Specialist workforce.

Rationale: These changes have closed the pipeline for graduates of the FAA-supported College Training Initiative (CTI), as well as prior-military controllers. The FAA initiated a 'barrier analysis' to understand why the diversity of ATCS was not meeting agency goals. The recent changes to ATCS hiring are incongruent with the barrier analysis recommendations. The proposed language and funding would allow for proper implementation of the barrier analysis recommendations and improve ATCS diversity while maintaining the taxpayer savings that the CTI and prior-military controller hiring pipelines allow.

Budget Account: Department of Transportation, Federal Aviation Administration, Air Traffic Organization

12. Title: FAA Regional Operation Centers

Program Description: Regional Operation Centers provide 24-hour accident and incident response.

Fiscal Year 2014 Enacted: \$9.879 million

Fiscal Year 2015 President's Budget Request: \$9.978 million

Additional Amount Requested: Support President's Budget

Language Requested: The Federal Aviation Administration shall not be close, reduce operating hours, or reduce staffing levels at Federal Aviation Regional Operations Centers as of the date of enactment of this act without providing a 90 day notification to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees.

Rationale: The services of Regional Operations Centers are critical to our nation's ability to provide 24-hour accident and incident response. Congress should increase oversight and authority of these centers to ensure capability is not lost prior to allowing FAA to make changes to this critical service.

Budget Account: Department of Transportation, Federal Aviation Administration, Operations

Thank you for your consideration of these requests. Please do not hesitate to contact my staff, Lindsay Kavanaugh, at (202) 224-1924 if additional information is required.

Sincerely,



Mark Begich
United States Senator